

The Honorable Robert F. Bennett

Opening Statement on the nomination of Stephen T. Ayers as Architect of the Capitol

Thursday, April 15, 2010

Today's hearing is to consider the nomination of Stephen Ayers as the Architect of the Capitol (AOC). On February 4, 2007 Stephen began serving as the Acting-Architect of the Capitol.

The Architect of the Capitol is responsible for "the maintenance, operation, development, and preservation of 16.5 million square feet of buildings and more than 450 acres of land throughout" the United States Capitol Complex. This includes the U.S. Supreme Court building and Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building.

The Architect is appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, 1990, established a 10-year term for the Architect as well as a bicameral, bipartisan congressional commission to recommend candidates to the President. As amended, this law provides for a commission consisting of 14 Members of Congress, including the Speaker of the House, the President pro tempore of the Senate, the House and Senate majority and minority leaders, and the chair and ranking minority members of the Committee on House Administration, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, and the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations.

We have received a letter of support for Mr. Ayers' nomination from the Utah Chapter of the American Institute of Architects stating, "We believe that Mr. Ayers possesses the qualities and characteristics necessary to be a successful steward of the U.S. Capitol Complex."

The well known American architect Charles Sumner Greene stated "A true architect builds for others; not for himself alone." (from his unpublished novel *Thais Thayer*, ca 1914) The Committee has had the privilege of working with Mr. Ayers for a little more than three years in his capacity as Acting-Architect. During that time staff morale among AOC employees has improved significantly; various changes in AOC leadership have taken place; and several major projects have been completed. It is apparent from the Committee's perspective that Mr. Ayers is following Charles Sumner Greene's admonition to not only build for others but to build others as well.

We look forward to Mr. Ayer's testimony and our continued relationship as he assumes this important position.

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